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U.S. Officials Study Nazi's Alleged CIA Ties
LYON, France

A U.S. Justice Department official has been allowed to examine historical documents relating to war criminal Klaus Barbie in an effort to probe the former Nazi's alleged links to the United States, judicial sources said Saturday.

A Central Intelligence Agency official also was in Lyon last week, and a representative of the Soviet Justice Ministry is expected in the southern city next week, the sources said.

But they said neither of the U.S. officials were allowed to meet with Barbie or examine legal papers in the case being prepared against him.

All three officials, who were not identified, hoped to obtain information about ties that may have existed between Barbie, known here as the "Butcher of Lyon," and foreign intelligence agencies after 1947, the sources said.

The Justice Department has made a formal request to the French government for permission to interrogate Barbie, who was expelled from Bolivia and brought to Lyon on Feb. 5 to face charges of ordering the deaths of thousands of French Jews and resistance fighters.

The Associated Press telephoned the U.S. Embassy in Paris several times for comment, but was told that the duty officer could not be reached.

In March, U.S. Attorney General William French Smith ordered a full investigation into charges that Barbie eluded French authorities after the war with the aid of U.S. intelligence agents and that he later had ties with the CIA.

Barbie, 69, was Gestapo chief in Lyon during World War II. He was twice condemned to death in absentia by French military courts, but the time limit has expired on those charges. Barbie is charged with crimes against humanity, but no trial date has been set.